

# No decision reached on plan for logging at Gray Whale Ranch

By KATHY KREIGER  
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — The state Board of Forestry heard public testimony Thursday but made no decision on the county's appeal of a logging plan proposed for Gray Whale Ranch.

Because published notice of the hearing listed today as the last day for public comment, the board was forced to continue the hearing, and postpone its deliberation and decision to its Jan. 5 and 6 meeting in Sacramento.

Comments may be faxed to the state Board of Forestry offices until 5 p.m. today, at (916) 653-0989, and should refer to THP 1-92-213/SCR.

The plan to log 124 acres of the

---

■ *Local long-range plan is approved — Page A6*

---

2,300-acre ranch near UC Santa Cruz was approved in October by the state Department of Forestry. At the request of community members, Third District Supervisor Gary Patton asked — and the county Board of Supervisors agreed — to appeal that decision.

The county argues that the harvesting plan does not do an adequate job of looking at the cumulative effects of a 73-unit housing subdivision proposed for part of the area to be logged.

The county also argues that the developer's application to rezone

*Please see LOGGING — A6*

A-6 — Friday, Dec. 4, 1992 — Santa Cruz Sentinel

## Logging at Gray Whale

*Continued from Page A1*

the subdivision land proves that he intends to convert the land from timber production to residential — which requires a timber zoning conversion permit.

Gray Whale Ranch representatives say there is "no direct relationship between the timber harvest plan and the residential proposal." Logging the area first makes sense, they say, in the event the housing proposal is approved.

Some 80 people packed the hearing at the Holiday Inn for the 10:30 a.m. item but as discussions among the board, the county and representatives of the property owner wore on, about half the audience left before public comment started around 3:30 p.m.

Public comments expanded on those argued by the county.

"What we have is the cart before the horse," said Celia Scott of Save the Gray Whale Ranch Parklands. "This timber harvesting plan is part of a larger project."

The map dividing the land into six timber harvesting zones, presented by Webster, had been submitted to the county as part of the subdivision application, she said, showing that the subdivision and the logging plan are "inextricably linked."

The current logging plan is the fourth proposed by owner Ron Yanke since he bought the property five years ago to provide logs for his Soledad county sawmill. Yanke has yet to harvest anything. Two

of the previous plans were overturned and a third was withdrawn. The proposed area was last logged in 1976 by Big Creek Lumber Co.

In a related action, the red-tagged grading of a road and creek at the south end of the ranch was resolved Thursday morning, according to Gray Whale property manager John Steinbacher. After meeting with county attorneys, Steinbacher said no charges have been filed, and he does not expect any. County attorneys previously said the project could be fined as much as \$50,000 and \$5,000 a day for violation of state and county regulations.

The county has approved the erosion controls he put in after the Nov. 14 incident.